

MANAGEMENT PLAN DIRECTIVES AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Plan Implementation

The UMRRFMP will be used by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to direct fisheries management activities for the next 10 years (2020-2029) on Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Hauser Reservoir, Holter Reservoir, and the Missouri River from Toston Dam to Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Hauser Dam to Holter Reservoir. Fish population monitoring will be conducted annually, as specified in Table 2, to monitor population trends and to investigate the effectiveness of management decisions. A Citizen Advisory Committee, appointed by the FWP Fish and Wildlife Commission, will provide oversight of the Management Plan. Population monitoring data will be evaluated, summarized, and presented annually to the Citizen Advisory Committee and interested citizens at annual public meetings for review (Appendix B).

Plan Development

This 10-year UMRRFMP builds upon past and recent public involvement (MFWP 1989; MFWP 1992; MFWP 2000; MFWP 2009) and was developed by FWP with input from a Citizen Workgroup.

The following goals for the UMRRFMP, 2020-2029 were identified:

1. Develop an adaptive and responsive fisheries Management Plan for the upper Missouri River system from Toston Dam to Holter Dam. Manage principle game fish populations in all waterbody sections throughout the UMRRFMP area as quality, multi-species fisheries while recognizing the importance of other species in the system.
2. Implement management strategies that emphasize trout and walleye while recognizing perch as an important game and forage species.
3. Evaluate and/or recommend revisions to management goals and strategies over the duration of the UMRRFMP.
4. Present standardized population monitoring evaluations and summaries annually to a Citizens Advisory Committee.

Public Involvement

The UMRRFMP revision process began in June 2018. Public involvement included a Citizens Scoping Committee (summer 2018), five open houses (summer 2018), four public meetings and an on-line survey (winter 2018/2019) Citizens Workgroup (spring 2019), and three additional open houses (summer 2019). Public involvement from summer 2018 to spring 2019 helped define five core public concerns for FWP and the Citizens Workgroup to address, those are:

1. Management Plan responsiveness;
2. Management Plan duration;
3. Re-establishing pre-2018 rainbow trout stocking rates throughout the plan area;
4. Declining yellow perch population trends; specifically, in Canyon Ferry and Holter Reservoirs;
5. Walleye population size structure throughout the plan area.

PART II

Draft plan alternatives were based on evaluating the five core public concerns and recommendations made by the Citizens Workgroup in May 2019. Additional information about public scoping efforts can be found in Appendix B.

Citizen Advisory Committee Appointment and Role

A 5-member Citizen Advisory Committee will be appointed each February by the FWP Fish and Wildlife Commission to function in an advisory capacity to FWP for fisheries management decisions throughout the plan area. The Citizen Advisory Committee will consist of no more than one advocate from 5 stakeholder groups as outlined in Advisory Committee Framework found in Appendix C.

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

The MEPA requires state government to be accountable to the people of Montana when it makes decisions that affect the human environment. MEPA provides a process to help ensure that government actions are based on informed decisions. It does this by requiring that reasonable alternatives are evaluated, the consequences of a decision are understood, and the public's concerns are known.

MEPA requires all state agencies to recognize and consider to the fullest extent possible the consequences that their actions may have on the quality of the human environment (75-1-201, Montana Code Annotated (MCA)) and directs them to:

- Utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will ensure the integrated use of the natural sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and decision making which may have an impact on the environment; and
- Develop methods and procedures which will ensure that environmental values and amenities are identified and may be given appropriate consideration in decision making along with economic and technical considerations.

MEPA requires FWP to:

- Issue a draft Management Plan;
- Encourage and accept public comments on the draft; and
- Issue a final Management Plan.

The Final Management Plan may:

- Develop and evaluate information not previously considered;
- Supplement, improve, or modify the analysis contained in the draft;
- Make factual corrections; and
- Explain why comments do or do not warrant further response.

PART II

Montana FWP has followed this framework while developing the previous two 10-year plans (MFWP 2000; MFWP 2009) and will follow a similar process for this plan. A public comment period for the draft Management Plan will commence following approval of the draft UMRRFMP by the FWP Fish and Wildlife Commission. See Appendix B for more information on management alternatives and public comments for development of the draft plan.

The draft UMRRFMP presents an integrated and interdisciplinary analysis of administrative alternatives for management of the upper Missouri River reservoir system. This document describes the proposed action and evaluates potential consequences on the physical environment. Analyses of impacts presented in this document were based on literature research, public comments, and interviews with FWP personnel and wildlife agency personnel in other states.

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